

Following is a summary of important business news published in the leading daily newspapers of Bangladesh. For the complete news, please follow the online link given below each news. Please note that the news summary doesn't reflect the opinion of BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited.

Cashless transactions get a fillip

- The central bank made this calculation based on a survey by McKinsey & Company, a consultancy firm from the US. Although Bangladesh Bank is yet to prepare a report on the cost of maintaining cash last year, this expense has surely decreased due to the expansion of digital financial services (DFS), according to an official of the banking regulator. The deepening recession caused by the pandemic has taken its toll on the global economy, including Bangladesh, but there is a ray of hope in the upward trend of DFS usage, said the managing director of Bank Asia.
- The use of all payment modes under DFS increased significantly throughout 2020 and the trend is still ongoing, he added. Transactions through mobile financial services (MFSs) also posted magnificent growth during the same period as underprivileged people are now embracing branchless banking windows in bigger numbers than ever. MFS transaction grew 36% year-on-year to BDT 572.53 billion in January, central bank data shows. The head of retail banking at Brac Bank said that growth in the country's financial sector has advanced by at least five years amid the pandemic as dependency on digital means has increased significantly.
- The use of both credit and debit cards has been on an exceptional rise, meaning that we are moving towards a cashless society, he added. The use of both credit and debit cards did indeed hit an all-time high in December last year, Bangladesh Bank data shows. Total card loans held by lenders stood at BDT 15.61 billion in December, which is a fresh record in terms of the lending amount. December's figures are up 8.84% from that of a month earlier and 23.78% year-on-year.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/cashless-transactions-get-fillip-2056777>

Remdesivir proves pharma strength

- Amidst the perfect storm stirred up by Covid-19, a drug used to treat a wide range of viral infections emerged as a silver lining for treatment seekers. Proving effective in the treatment of severe Covid-19 cases, the drug taking the generic term remdesivir had countries all over scrambling after it. By the end of fiscal 2020-21, the pharmaceutical sector could fetch up to BDT 7.00 billion exporting remdesivir, according to industry insiders. Currently Eskayef (SK-F), Beacon, Incepta, Beximco, Healthcare and Square are producing the drug, which was first developed by US biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences.
- After catering to local demand, Beacon shipped more than BDT 1.30 billion worth of the product to 21 destinations while 18 other countries, including some in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, are currently in negotiations for supplies. The chief operating officer of Beximco, earlier said his company was exporting remdesivir to 10 countries, including some in Latin America and the Middle East.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/remdesivir-proves-pharma-strength-2056769>

EBL to get BDT 10.00 billion BB fund

- Eastern Bank Limited is going to use a revolving refinance fund amounting BDT 10.00 billion to support customers in technological development and upgradation of their export-oriented industries. The fund, formed from the Bangladesh Bank's own resources, aims at supporting export-oriented industries to improve their skillset and preparing them to enjoy a competitive advantage in the international arena.
- The fund will be channelled by EBL to its customers at competitive pricing for development and upgradation of capital machinery and technology, energy-efficient machinery or technology, business process reengineering or automation-related machinery or technology, operations management-related machinery or technology, waste management machinery or technology, air management machinery or technology, heat management machinery or technology, workplace management machinery or technology, water management machinery or technology, human resource development and management-related upgraded technology and account, sales and marketing management automation machinery or technology upgradation.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/132035/eb1-to-get-BDT-1000cr-bb-fund>

Beximco signs deal with City Bank Capital on Sukuk

- A signing ceremony of Islamic Shariah compliant Sukuk Al Istisna for BDT 30 billion took place between Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited (BEXIMCO) and City Bank Capital Resources Limited on Sunday. Beximco Ltd is the originator of the issue and City Bank Capital is the Arranger, Adviser and Issue Manager of this issue. This Secured Convertible Asset Backed Sukuk will be issued (subject to BSEC approval) for the purpose of construction of the solar

projects of Teesta Solar Ltd and Korotoa Solar Ltd the two subsidiaries of Beximco Power Company Ltd, and for financing and refinancing of the machineries and equipment required for the expansion of Beximco Ltd's textile division, said a statement. Face value has been set at BDT 100. Minimum Subscription size is BDT 5000 and tenure is 5 years. Profit rate is 9% p.a. or above.

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/beximco-signs-deal-with-city-bank-capital-on-sukuk-1615136018>

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/132031/beximco-signs-agreement-for-BDT-3000cr-sukuk-bond>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/city-bank-capital-issue-manager-BDT-3000cr-beximco-sukuk-2056725>

Lub-rref to debut on bourses Tuesday

- Lub-rref (Bangladesh) is waiting for its debut on the bourses on Tuesday, following its BDT 1.50 billion initial public offering (IPO) under the book building method. The lubricant manufacturer said in its IPO filing that it would invest BDT 980 million to expand its existing manufacturing plant which would enable the company to capture 20% of the market share – a significant jump from its existing 8% market share in terms of volume. BNO Lubricants – a brand of the company – sells around 10,000 tonnes of lubricant annually for BDT 1.75 billion. Incorporated in 2001, Lub-rref commercially launched its manufacturing plant in 2006.

- As of the fiscal year that ended on 30 June, 2019, Lub-rref earned BDT 2.08 against each of its shares, while the company's five-year average earnings per share was BDT 2.23. The net asset value per share of the company with BDT 1.00 billion paid-up capital (pre-IPO) was BDT 31.92 a year ago. It would be BDT 25.96 without adding the revaluation surplus of assets. NRB Equity Management is working as the issue manager to facilitate the stock market listing of the company.

<https://tbsnews.net/economy/stock/lub-rref-debut-bourses-tuesday-212470>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2021/03/07/lub-rref-makes-its-debut-at-bourse-on-tuesday>

<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/stock-corporate/lub-rref-bangladesh-makes-debut-tomorrow-1615135994>

Thayaparan appointed Robi chairman

- Thayaparan Sangarapillai, a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, has been appointed chairman of the board of directors of Robi, said a press release. Thaya brings with him over 35 years of experience in providing audit and business advisory services to clients in a wide range of industries. He is also a member of the Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Malaysian Institute of Accountants.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/132060/thayaparan-appointed-robi-chairman>

World Stock and Commodities*

Index Name	Close Value	Value Change YTD	% Change YTD
Crude Oil (WTI)*	\$67.92	\$19.40	39.98%
Crude Oil (Brent)*	\$71.32	\$19.52	37.68%
Gold Spot*	\$1,713.06	(\$182.04)	-9.61%
DSEX	5,584.30	182.23	3.37%
S&P 500	3,841.94	85.87	2.29%
FTSE 100	6,630.52	170.00	2.63%
BSE SENSEX	50,405.32	2,653.99	5.56%
KSE-100	45,837.35	2,081.97	4.76%
CSEALL	7,054.49	280.27	4.14%

Exchange Rates

USD 1 = BDT 84.79*

GBP 1 = BDT 117.29*

EUR 1 = BDT 101.04*

INR 1 = BDT 1.16*

*Currencies are taken from XE Currency Converter and Commodities are taken from Bloomberg.

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BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage Limited

Research

Ayaz Mahmud, CFA	Head of Research	ayaz.mahmud@bracepl.com	01708 805 221
Anika Mafiz	Research Analyst	anika.mafiz@bracepl.com	01708 805 206
Sadman Sakib	Research Associate	sadman.sakib@bracepl.com	01730 727 939
Md. Rafiqul Islam	Research Associate	mrafiqulislam@bracepl.com	01708 805 229
Md Mahirul Quddus	Research Associate	mmahirul.quddus@bracepl.com	01709 636 546

International Trade and Sales

Ahsanur Rahman Bappi	CEO	bappi@bracepl.com	01730 357 991
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BRAC EPL Research www.bracepl.com

Symphony, Plot No.: S.E.(F) – 9(3rd Floor), Road No.: 142
 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka – 1212
 Phone: + (880)-2-9852446-50
 Fax: + (880)-2-9852451-52
 E-Mail: research@bracepl.com